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ABSTRACT

A pilot study was conducted on the communication styles of male and female administrators at a university campus. Interviews were conducted with four male and four female administrators about their background, motivations and career goals, support, problems, and leadership styles. Because of the exploratory nature of the investigation, the one-hour interviews tended toward open-ended question answering. In contrast to similar studies, little difference between male and female administrators was found. The results suggested that the university climate may in fact encourage more androgynous managers. The men and women interviewed showed remarkably more similarities than differences. Although the women noted slightly more concern for others, they also were concerned with and skillful at the more traditionally male organizational behaviors. The responses of the men demonstrated recognition and development of skills in relating and communicating with others. Both groups stressed the importance of both a task and a people orientation for effective administration. (RL)

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MANAGERIAL STYLES IN ACADEME:

DO MEN AND WOMEN DIFFER?

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MANAGERIAL STYLES IN ACADEME: DO MEN AND WOMEN DIFFER?

Dr. Rebecca Leonard

As women have entered the workplace in increasing numbers over the last several years, more attention has been given to the role and behavior of women in the organization. Although women constitute 30% of the total union membership in the United States, a recent Rockefeller Foundation study found that leadership positions in the unions "are still held almost entirely by men."[1] Additionally, the study characterized 80% of the female labor force as "low-paid, low-skilled, low-status, under-unionized, [and in] dead-end jobs," and reported that women earn 59¢ for every dollar earned by men. Hennig and Jardim, in The Managerial Woman estimate that some 500,000 people in 1977 earned more than $25,000 per year in the United States, with only 12,500, or 2.5% of these women. Apparently, even though women at an ever increasing rate are entering the job market, management is still primarily a male domain.

Several recent studies have investigated the problems women encounter in management. For example, Bass, Krusell and Alexander measured the attitudes of male managers toward working women.[3] They found, in part, that managers did not judge women as good supervisors. Interestingly enough, the managers did not think that women were less capable than men, but they believed that other men and women would rather have a male supervisor. "The problem seems to be that societal norms do not sanction the placement of women in dominant positions. The possibility of women becoming supervisors proved very uncomfortable for the managers."[4]

John Athanassiades studied the attitudes of females in subordinate positions in an organization. He concluded "women feel that they have

less opportunity to participate in decisions than men, feel more than men that they do not have sufficient authority in their jobs; that too often, decisions are imposed on them from above; and feel less free than men do to express disagreement with superiors."[5] More importantly, male supervisors' attitudes like those revealed in the Bass, et. al. study, appeared evident to the female subordinates, and consequently the women felt inadequate.

Another study, conducted by Deaux and Emswiller[6] evaluated male and female performance in a small group situation. The researchers found that when males and females performed equally well on a male-related task (one which is traditionally perceived as male), the male's performance tended to be attributed to skill, and the female's performance tended to be attributed to luck. Further, they discovered that when males performed well on a female-related task, their performances again were attributed to skill. Consequently men, independent of the task, were rated as more skillful than women.

Despite these apparent barriers, some women have met with relative success in management positions. In interviews with nearly one hundred women in various levels of management, Marion M. Woods[7] discovered ten common characteristics which these women managers reported were important for their management success: Competence; Education; Realism (understanding that women may have to be better than men to make it); Aggressiveness (defined as initiative); Self-Confidence; Career-Mindedness; Femininity (not playing a male role); Strategy (having goals or plans); Support of an Influential Male; and Uniqueness (ability to use the unique talents and assets of women).

Also, small group research reveals important information about male and female leadership styles. After reviewing the research in sex differences in group communication, Baird, convinced that a sex-role theory of behavior is supported by the group literature, related that males are:

> encouraged to be independent, agressive, problem-oriented, and risk-taking in their interactions, more active and aggressive verbally, more interested and capable in problem-solving, more willing to take risks, more resistant to social influence, more competitive when bargaining, and more likely to assume leadership in task-oriented situations.[8]

Females, on the other hand, are:

> taught to be noncompetitive, dependent, empathic, passive, and interpersonally oriented, typically are more willing to self-disclose, more expressive of emotions and perceptive of others' emotional states, more sensitive to nonverbal cues, less interested and able in problem-solving, relatively unwilling to assume risks, more yielding to social pressure, more cooperative in bargaining, and less likely to assume leadership, although capable of providing leadership in certain situations.[9]

Also Chapman compared leadership styles of males and females and discovered that women tend to behave in ways which are significantly more relationship oriented than do males.[10] However Chapman concluded that there was no significant difference in overall style, although sex differences in leadership behaviors existed. Another study by Chapman indicated that the female manager would be in a double bind. If accommodative in her leadership, the males criticized her for being too intuitive or passive. But if autocratic and highly task-oriented in her leadership, she perceived herself unfeminine. So she will either be the subject of much male criticism, or she will be uncomfortable with an unnatural style.[11]

Day and Stogdill[12] compared male and female leadership behaviors in the military. They found that in parallel positions, males and females behaved similarly, and their subordinates evaluated them in a parallel fashion. However, female supervisors were described as more considerate than male supervisors. Day and Stogdill concluded that slow advancement of women was not a result of ineffectiveness, but "a result of their being females."[13]

Rosenfeld and Fowler investigated whether individual variables were predictive of autocratic and democratic leadership styles for males and females. They found:

> Whereas democratic males were characterized as forceful, analytical, and as valuing the love of people. . . democratic females were characterized as open-minded and nurturing. The democratic male may appear to group members as analytical and thereby aloof, while the democratic female may appear to be warm and affectionate.[14]

No differences in behavior between autocratic males and females could be predicted. "Autocratic leaders of both sexes were characterized as aggressive, revengeful, and as needing to be the recognized authorities in their groups."[15]

In a study of Department Heads in ten Senior High Schools in Florida, Roussell examined sex of the administrator and described the teachers' perceptions of organizational climate. No difference was found between male and female department heads' sense of power, nor between male and female teachers' perceptions of the department heads. Yet some other differences were discovered:

> One is tempted at first to categorize the male department head as being task-oriented and the female department head as person-oriented. The males were perceived as higher on aloofness, production emphasis, and trust,

> all of which are characterized by universalistic and task-oriented kinds of behavior; the females were perceived as being higher in consideration, characterized by an inclination to try to do a little something extra for teachers, a form of particularistic behavior.[16]

From the results Roussell suggested that there were different expectations of the female department heads by the male faculty than of the male department heads. Therefore she concluded that the sex of the department head did affect the behavior of the teachers.

Recently Baird and Bradley[17] have offered an encompassing view of male and female management styles. They investigated the perceived communication style of male and female managers by questioning the subordinates of the managers. Baird and Bradley concluded that males and females have distinct leadership styles, and that females did not merely enact a male managers' role, but instead "communicate[d] in ways markedly different from the behaviors exhibited by male managers."[18] Specifically, women:

1. give more information;
2. stress interpersonal relations more;
3. are more receptive to ideas;
4. are more encouraging of effort;
5. show more concern;
6. are more attentive.

On the other hand, men:

1. are more dominant;
2. are more quick to challenge others;
3. are more directive in conversations.

Because of these findings, Baird and Bradley evaluated female managers as "more effective supervisors than the male managers seen in this investigation."[19]

Despite these and numerous other studies in sex and management, this author has found no research comparing styles of women and men in

academic administrations (except those previously reported by Roussell). Perhaps this scarcity of research emerges from the absence of women in academic administrations in higher education. At North Carolina State University, for example, a State University with an enrollment of 19,597, and a tenured and tenure-track faculty of 1066, only 5 women in academic administration exist, some 3% of all such positions.

As more women in higher education seek administrative positions, can we expect women to reflect the same styles as those documented in research from business and government? This pilot study, designed to offer partial answers to this question, investigated the communication styles of male and female administrators on one University campus.

Method

The researcher interviewed four male and four female administrators about their background, motivations and career goals, support, problems, and leadership styles. The interview questions, derived from conclusions reached in the studies cited above, were created by the researcher. Because of the exploratory nature of this pilot investigation, most of the questions were open-ended. (See Table I for interview schedule)

The subjects were four female administrators (two department heads, two assistant department heads), and four male administrators (two department heads, and two assistant department heads). Excluding this author, there are only four female administrators on the campus under study, so the four women interviewed represented the entire available population. The four male subjects were chosen because of their parallel positions to the female subjects (same position, same school). All subjects participated in the interview which lasted approximately 60 minutes. The author conducted all eight of the interviews.

TABLE I

Interview Questions and Their Corresponding Interview Topics

Interview Topics	Corresponding Interview Questions
BACKGROUND OF INTERVIEWEE	#1 When did you join the faculty at NCSU?
	#2 When were you appointed to your present administrative position?
	#3 Is this your first administrative position?
MOTIVATIONS OF INTERVIEWEE	#4 What did you consider when you made the decision to take this appointment? What were the pros and cons?
	#8 What personal rewards accrue from your administrative job?
	#9 What professional rewards accrue from your administrative job?
GOALS OF INTERVIEWEE	#13 What are your career goals in 5 years? in 10 years?
SUPPORT OF INTERVIEWEE	#5 Who was the greatest help to you in securing this job? (i.e. faculty, students, departmental administration, school administration) In what ways?
	#6 Who (from #5 above) is the most helpful to you now in your job? In what ways?
	#7 Do you feel that you have the support of your immediate superior? Your subordinates?

TABLE I (Continued)

PROBLEMS OF INTERVIEWEE	#14	What particular problems do you encounter in your administrative job?
	#15	Do you find there are more problems with personnel or with tasks? Explain. About what percentage of your time do you spend with personnel?
LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND STYLE	#10	What skills are important to effective administration?
	#11	What special skills do you have that seem critical in job success?
	#12	What kinds of skills have you learned since your appointment which have helped you do a more effective job?
	#16	When talking with your co-workers, do you tell them about your attitudes concerning departmental issues?
	#17	When talking with your co-workers, do you share your feelings with them? Do you talk with them about their feelings?
	#18	Do you talk with your co-workers about your life outside of the University?
	#19	When personnel conflicts occur, how do you resolve them?
	#20	When problems with tasks occur, how do you resolve them?
	#21	How do you think you are perceived by your colleagues?
	#22	About how much of your time is spent listening and talking with faculty members? with students?
	#23	In a typical meeting, do you spend more time listening or talking?

TABLE I (Continued)

#24 Do you have any methods for best running a meeting? e.g. how do you handle an incessant talking? someone who won't talk?

#25 How important is it to you that the people you work with like one another and get along?

#26 How important is it to you that the people you work with like you? Is it more important that they respect your work, or that they like you?

Results

The female administrators interviewed had been on the faculty at the University for an average of 11.2 years, while the male administrators had been on the faculty for an average of 15.5 years. The women had been appointed to their administrative positions on the average of 6.75 years after joining the faculty, while the men were appointed 9.75 years after becoming a faculty member. Only one of the four women reported having previous administrative experience (in a public school), while three of the four men had previous administrative positions on the University level.

Responses to question #4 (what did you consider when you made the decision to take this appointment?) were similar for both men and women. Both stated that the position was a challenge and that they had something positive to contribute to the Department, particularly in terms of good administrative skills. Also, both groups mentioned salary increase as a positive inducement. Both groups considered similar negative points associated with an administrative appointment. All interviewees mentioned

that the position took time from teaching, research, and writing. One male indicated the possibility of conflict occurring between colleagues, and he feared he would be unable to manage the conflict. One female, concerned because the appointment meant changing from a 9 to a 12 month appointment, expressed uneasiness in the time taken away during the summer months, which she had previously devoted to her family.

When asked to list the personal rewards of their administrative position, one male and one female maintained that the advantages decreased over time. One of each group noted the financial advantage. One of each group mentioned that the sense of accomplishment and satisfaction rewarded them. One male interviewee explained the rewards, in that administrative work provided him with more immediate feedback than teaching, and one female noted her increased knowledge of the workings of the University as a personal reward.

Interestingly, professional rewards listed by males and females differed considerably. The men talked of the development of professional relationships, whereas the women listed prestige, increased opportunity for promotion, and job satisfaction.

Both male and female interviewees maintained that the greatest help in securing their position was from their immediate superior and faculty colleagues. All male interviewees and two of the four female interviewees claimed that their colleagues were the most helpful to them now in the completion of their duties. One man reported that his secretary was extremely helpful. Two of the four women remarked that no specific person particularly helped them.

Three of four in each group acknowledged the support of their immediate superior in the organization. All of the men and three of the

four women expressed that their subordinates were supportive.

Only <u>one</u> of the four in each group aspired to further positions in academic administration, yet even that individual agreed with the others in their group that effective teaching and writing were of paramount importance in their future.

Three of four men and three of four women pointed out that the greatest problem in their job was dealing with people, with the men estimating more time spent on tasks than on personnel (61% on tasks; 39% on personnel). Also women reported more time spent on tasks than on personnel (59% on tasks; 41% on personnel), yet those time blocks were slightly different than that of the men's. The women gave slightly more of their time to others than did the men.

The two groups generated similar lists of skills important to effective administration. Both mentioned the ability to work with others, with special emphasis on communication skills. Also, both groups considered being organized and committed to work for the needs of the organization important. The women mentioned common sense, initiative, and decisiveness as important skills. The men discussed knowledge of resources, the ability to delegate work, and a personality which accomodates pressure.

Men and women differed on their responses to question #11 (what skills do you have?) and on question #12 (what skills have you developed while on the job?). The men explained that they were good at working with others, at delegating responsibility, especially to subordinates, and at organization. Women mentioned concern for others,

and consideration for the feelings of others. Men felt they had developed tolerance and democratic leadership skills while on the job. Women had learned more about being tough, working efficiently in a short period of time, and dealing with a large volume of paper work.

All four women responded with a definite yes when asked if they shared their attitudes concerning departmental issues with their colleagues. However, the men responded with a qualified yes. One said he used to be more open about his attitudes than now, another said "normally," a third responded that he generally did not share his attitudes with others. All male and female respondants reported that they shared their feelings with others selectively, and only one of each group reported talking with co-workers about their personal life.

The men and women interviewed used similar methods for conflict resolution. All four men and two of the four women talked and listened with each person involved in the conflict, and attempted to facilitate a resolution. The other two women said their job descriptions did not involve those types of responsibilities.

Three of the four women and two of the four men do not hesitate to ask for additional information or to ask for help in completing problem tasks. The other woman and two men said they merely struggle through the difficulties, with no help from others.

All members of both groups reported their primary style in a meeting with co-workers involves listening to others. One man and one woman spend alot of time giving information in meetings, but they see their role primarily to be a facilitator.

The men and women generally used different adjectives when asked to describe how other perceived them. However both groups included both job-related and personality-related perceptions. The women said they thought their co-workers perceived them as honest, hard-headed, human, benevolent, caring, intimidating, efficient, pushy, accessible, and as doing a good job. The men mentioned efficient, competent, fair, straight-forward, accessible, friendly, and reserved.

Both male and female administrators valued an atmosphere where people get along with one another, although they admitted it was unrealistic to hope that everyone like one another. One man said, "When I first took over, I naively assumed that everyone would love each other and be one big happy family. It's less important now. I'm more realistic." One woman responded, "I don't expect them to like one another, but I do expect them to show respect and positive regard. I think there are ways to confront and interact that don't have to be abrasive and abusive." All interviewees said they would like others to like them, but admitted that it was more important that others respect their work than like them. One female interviewee said, "I would like them to respect me. As long as some like me, I'm O.K." A male interviewee responded, "I'm sure there are efficient managers that are not liked. My perception would be that to the extent that there is a personality problem that impedes my effectiveness in the work, then it is important."

Discussion

Several conclusions can be drawn from the results of this investigation. The first is that the women interviewed have been members of the faculty for an average of 4.3 years less than the men, and had been appointed to

administrative positions on the average of three years sooner in their careers than the men. The opportunity for women to be appointed to administrative positions on the campus investigated, seems to be improving.

A second conclusion concerns the apparent similarities between the men and women interviewed. There were many more similarities than differences reported. Both groups considered similar issues when contemplating a job in administration; the personal rewards of the job seemed to be the same for both groups; the most helpful persons or groups were the same for both female and male interviewees; their career aspirations are similar; the problems encountered, skills necessary for effective administration, methods used to resolve conflict, style in running meetings, and feelings concerning the affiliation of their colleagues were all quite similar for both men and women.

The differences between male and female administrators, a third conclusion of this research, generally centered around treatment of people and tasks. Previous research insists that female and male leaders differ sharply in their task versus people orientations. There was a slight difference noted here as well. But that difference was not as sharply defined as might have been expected. The women reported slightly more time spent with others than did the men (2% difference). Women reported slightly more of a tendency to share information (both attitudes and feelings) with others. And the women used more personal adjectives than did the men when asked to report how they were perceived by their colleagues.

Whereas the two groups reported similar personal rewards of their administrative jobs, the women said their professional rewards centered around prestige, greater opportunities for promotion, and job satisfaction.

However the men talked primarily of the opportunities to establish professional relationships as rewarding. Interestingly, the men perceived a "relationship" reward from their work, whereas the women listed job related rewards as most important.

Another interesting difference in the male and female responses emerged from the questions on skills important to administrative work. The women reported that their best skills when entering the administrative position were people related skills: concern for others, and consideration for the feelings of others. The men indicated that they were skillful in delegating responsibility, in organization, and in working with others. But the women learned how to be tough, work efficiently, and deal with paper work while on the job-all-task-related skills. The men reported becoming more skillful at democratic leadership and becoming more tolerant of others, both generally people-related skills. Though entering administration with different orientations, the two groups apparently found it necessary to learn the other set of skills to be more effective in their jobs.

This writer believes that there are two very important reasons why the results of this investigation showed, in contrast to other studies, little difference between male and female administrators.

First, the atmosphere or organizational climate of the University is vastly different than the organizational climate in Business and Industry, and Government, the setting for most previous research in leadership style. In a study of female supervisors in government and in business, Dimarco and Whitsett found that each organization tended to attract a unique type of female supervisor. They suggested that

> leadership style and life style orientation, which reflect attitudinal and value dimensions, are a function of or at least strongly influenced by the values and norms of the organization.[20]

So the organization influences the style of leadership exihibited by both men and women. Although the University hierarchy has traditionally been male dominated or paternalistic, the atmosphere has also been much more conducive to human concerns than have business, industry, and government. Consequently, this author reasons that the type of person drawn to the University administration, whether male or female, would reflect this orientation -- tasks and intellectual development, as well as human and nuturing concerns. Our task in the University is the development of values and skills in people. Consequently, the human values would be as important as the tasks, and certainly even more important than in the other types of organizations noted. In addition, all interviewees in this investigation were in the Schools of Education and Humanities and Social Sciences, fields of study with a greater human value orientation than the other disciplines traditionally represented in the University. Those who would choose a career in higher education, and especially in fields of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, would probably tend toward more of a balance in task and human concerns in administrative style. Dimarco and Whitsett suggest that "to some degree, individuals are attracted to and remain with organizations that appear to fit their personal characteristics."[21] Kanter and Fassel observed all-female groups and organizations in order to compare the effects of sex on leadership. They concluded that "structure shaped behavior. The definition of the situation defined how people behaved."[22] We might well expect administrators

to behave differently in the University than in another organization.

The second reason why the sex differences demonstrated in this research were negligible is corollary to the first. Since the University as an organization, supports human values, and since the people who tend to choose a career in that organization would probably share those values, those people (male and female) would probably also have a greater tendency to behave similarly. Alice G. Sargent contends that:

> changing values for managerial style are coalescing with the new composition of the workforce to create dual pressures for shifting mores. This could develop androgynous managers -- people who have learned and value both 'masculine' and 'feminine' behaviors, fatherly styles and maternal behaviors, competition and cooperation....This androgyny is an archetype that represents the coming together of, for what of better terms, maleness and femaleness."[23]

The results of this research suggest that the University climate may in fact encourage more androgynous managers. The men and women interviewed for this study showed remarkably more similarities than differences, and although the women noted slightly more concern for others, they also were concerned with and skillful at the more traditionally male organizational behaviors. The responses of the men demonstrated a recognition of and a development of skills in relating and communicating with others. Both groups stressed the importance of both a task and a people orientation for effective administration. Both groups admitted skill in each area. It seems that these administrators were attempting to blend the best of both styles.

These results are not conclusive. This investigation used a small sample and was based on interview data alone. Further research must be

conducted in this area before these conclusions can be substantiated. But this present research does question the results of previous research in Business, Industry and Government, and points to the need for further investigation of the University and the managers it sponsors.

NOTES

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[5]John C. Athanassiades, "An Investigation of Some Communication Patterns of Female Subordinates in Hierarchical Organizations," Human Relations, Vol. 27, No. 3 (1974), 195-209.

[6]Kay Deaux and Tim Emswiller, "Explanations of Successful Performance on Sex-Linked Tasks: What is Skill for the Male is Luck for the Female," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol. 29, No. 1 (1974), 80-85.

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[10]Brad Chapman, "Comparison of Male and Female Leadership Styles," Academy of Management Journal, Vol. 18, no. 3 (1975), 645-50.

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[12]David R. Day and Ralph M. Stogdill, "Leader Behavior of Male and Female Supervisors: A Comparative Study," Personnel Psychology, 25 (1972), 353-360.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Lawrence B. Rosenfeld and Gene D. Fowler, "Personality, Sex, and Leadership Style," Communication Monographs, Vol. 43 (November, 1976), 320-324.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Cecile Roussell, "Relationship of Sex of Department Head to Department Climate," Administrative Science Quarterly, Vol. 19, No. 2 (1974), 211-220.

[17]John E. Baird, Jr. and Patricia Hayes Bradley, "Styles of Management and Communication: A Comparative Study of Men and Women," Communication Monographs, Vol. 46 (June, 1979), 101-111.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Nicholas DiMarco and Susan E. Whitsitt, "A Comparison of Female Supervisors in Business and Government Organizations," Journal of Vocational Behavior, 6 (1975), 185-196.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Rosabeth Moss Kanter and Diane Fassel, "Some Observations of Women's Leadership in Organizations," in Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Men and Women of The Corporation (New York: Basic Books, Inc.), 1977, p. 300.

[23]Alice G. Sargent, "The Androgynous Blend: Best of Both Worlds?" Management Review, October, 1978, p. 61.